

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-06

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FM AMCONSUL DURBAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2071

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

UNCLAS DURBAN 0399

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, SF

SUBJ: SUTTNER CONVICTED

OF CONTRAVENING SUPPRESSION OF

COMMUNISM ACT

REF: DURBAN 391

1. UNIVERSITY OF NATAL LAW LECTURER RAYMOND SUTTNER WAS CONVICTED ON TWO COUNTS OF CONTRAVENING THE SUPPRESSION OF COMMUNISM ACT AND SENTENCED TO SEVEN AND ONE HALF YEARS IMPRISONMENT NOVEMBER 13. TWO INDIVIDUALS ARRESTED SHORTLY AFTER SUTTNER, LAW STUDENT LAWRENCE KUNY AND ZULU LECTURER JENNIFER ROXBURGH, WERE RELEASED WITHOUT BEING CHARGED FOLLOWING THEIR TESTIMONY FOR THE GOVERNMENT AGAINST SUTTNER.

2. COMMENT: ENTIRE EPISODE HAS AN ENIGMATIC QUALITY--ALMOST AS IF SUTTNER WAS COURTING FAILURE FROM THE VERY BEGINNING OF HIS ATTEMPT TO PLAY THE ROLE OF A REVOLUTIONARY. ACCORDING TO SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS, WHO KNEW AND WORKED WITH SUTTNER, HE IS A MOST UNLIKELY CONSPIRATOR. A TACITURN INDIVIDUAL, HE KEPT MOSTLY TO HIMSELF AND APPEARED TO THEM UNCLASSIFIED

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NOT TO HAVE BEEN OVERLY INTERESTED IN POLITICS. THE

RECIPIENTS OF HIS PAMPHLETS WERE RESTRICTED TO A SMALL GROU
OF UNIVERSITY FACULTY MEMBERS AND STUDENTS WHO POSSESS
RELATIVELY LITTLE POLITICAL INFLUENCE. ADDITIONALLY, SUTTNER'S
CHOICE OF ACCOMPLICES WAS POOR AND HIS ATTEMPTS TO INDOC-
TRINATE THEM MANIFESTLY DEFICIENT; THEY "SANG" TO THE POLICE
FOLLOWING ONLY THE GENTLEST PRODDING. FINALLY, THE GOVERNMENT
MADE NO ATTEMPT TO DISCOVER THE SITE OF SUTTNER'S ALLGED
TRAINING NOR TO IDENTIFY HIS SUPERIORS--QUITE POSSIBLY
BECAUSE SUTTNER NEVER UNDERWENT ANY TRAINING AND DID NOT
REPORT REGULARLY TO ANYONE.

3 RATHER THAN A REVOLUTIONARY, SUTTNER APPEARS TO BE AN
IDEALISTIC, BUT VERY NAIVE INDIVIDUAL WHO MAY HAVE BEEN ACTING
ON HIS OWN OR, AT MOST, WAS BEING USED BY OTHERS MERELY FOR
THE ELEMENTARY AND MECHANICAL TASK OF DISTRIBUTING PAMPHLETS.
HAVING SPOKEN ONLY BRIEFLY AT THE TRIAL, SUTTNER'S MOTIVES
ARE UNCLEAR BUT HIS ACTIVITIES APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN DESIGNED
TO SERVE BOTH AN IDEOLOGICAL GOAL AND SOME PERSONAL
PSYCHOLOGICAL NEED.
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